

What is claimed is:

1. An arthroscopic suture thread comprising:
a flexible, braided portion capable of securing the targeted tissue; and
a monofilament leader portion having a leader length, the monofilament leader portion coupled to the flexible, braided portion, the leader length being longer than an elongated passageway of a suture punch, so that when used with the suture punch, the monofilament leader portion is fed through the elongated passageway ahead of the flexible, braided portion.
2. An arthroscopic suture thread according to claim 1, wherein the flexible, braided portion has a braided length, the leader length being at least as long as the braided length.
3. An arthroscopic suture thread according to claim 1, wherein the braided portion is made from a non-bioabsorbable material.
4. An arthroscopic suture thread according to claim 3, wherein the non-bioabsorbable material is selected from Dacron®, nylon, and polypropylene.
5. An arthroscopic suture thread according to claim 4, wherein the non-bioabsorbable material is Dacron®.
6. An arthroscopic suture thread according to claim 3, wherein the leader portion is made from a biocompatible material.

7. An arthroscopic suture thread according to claim 3, wherein the leader portion is made from a non-bioabsorbable material.

8. An arthroscopic suture thread according to claim 3, wherein the leader portion is made from a material having stiffness at least equal to that of polypropylene.

9. An arthroscopic suture thread according to claim 1, wherein the braided portion and the leader portion have approximately the same diameter.

10. An arthroscopic suture thread according to claim 1, wherein the thread is manufactured by connecting the braided portion to the monofilament leader portion by heat welding.

11. An arthroscopic suture thread comprising a braided suture coated with a bioabsorbable composition for providing the arthroscopic suture thread with a sufficient stiffness to allow the suture thread to be pushed through a passageway and hollow needle of a suture punch.

12. An arthroscopic suture thread according to claim 11, wherein the braided suture is made from a non-bioabsorbable material.

13. An arthroscopic suture thread according to claim 12, wherein the non-bioabsorbable material is Dacron®.

14. An arthroscopic suture thread according to claim 11, wherein the bioabsorbable composition is polydioxanone.

15. An arthroscopic suturing system comprising:
a suture punch having a passageway and a hollow needle at a distal end of the passageway; and
a suture thread comprising a multi-filament, flexible, non-bioabsorbable portion and a leader portion, the leader portion being stiffer than the flexible portion and longer than the passageway to permit pushing the suture thread along the passageway and out through the hollow needle.

16. An arthroscopic suturing system according to claim 15, wherein the multi-filament, flexible portion is made from Dacron®.

17. An arthroscopic suturing system according to claim 15, wherein the multi-filament, flexible portion and the leader portion of the suture thread are similar in diameter.

18. An arthroscopic suturing system according to claim 15, wherein the flexible portion of the suture thread is coupled to the leader portion by heat welding.

19. An arthroscopic suturing system according to claim 15, wherein the leader portion is made from a material having stiffness at least equal to that of polypropylene.

20. A method for arthroscopically suturing tissues comprising:

placing a suture punch through an arthroscopic portal, the punch having a passageway, a hollow needle at a distal end of the passageway, the distal end placed proximal to tissues to be secured, and a feeder wheel proximate a proximal end to the passageway, the suture punch designed to advance a sufficiently stiff suture through the portal;

providing an arthroscopic suture thread comprising a flexible, multi-filament non-bioabsorbable portion for fixation and security of tissues, and a monofilament leader portion coupled to an end of the flexible, multifilament non-bioabsorbable portion, the leader portion being longer than the passageway and sufficiently stiff so as to allow the feeder wheel to facilitate, by rotation, advancement of the leader portion along the passageway and out through the hollow needle;

inserting the leader portion into the passageway of the suture punch;

puncturing the needle across the tissues;

rotating the feeder wheel to advance the leader portion along the passageway until a segment of the leader portion is pushed out through the needle and across the tissues; and

drawing the leader portion away from the tissues until a segment of the braided portion has passed through the tissues.

21. A method according to claim 20 further comprising:

removing the leader portion from the multi-filament, non-bioabsorbable portion.

22. A method according to claim 20 further comprising:
disengaging the needle from the tissues; and
pulling the suture punch away from the tissues.
23. A method for arthroscopically suturing tissue comprising:
providing a suture punch having a passageway and a hollow needle at a distal end of the passageway;
providing an arthroscopic suture thread including a braided non-bioabsorbable suture having a bioabsorbable composition coating for providing a sufficient stiffness so as to allow the suture thread to be pushed through the passageway and out through the hollow needle;
inserting a coated end of the suture thread into the passageway;
puncturing the needle across the tissues; and
advancing the suture thread along the passageway until a segment of the suture thread is pushed through the needle and across the tissues.
24. A method according to claim 23 further comprising:
disengaging the needle from the tissues; and
pulling the suture punch away from the tissues.
25. A method according to claim 23 wherein the suture punch further comprises a feeder wheel proximate a proximal end of the passageway and wherein advancing the suture thread comprises rotating the feeder wheel to advance the suture thread.

26. An arthroscopic suturing system according to claim 15 wherein the suture punch further comprises a feeder wheel proximate a proximal end of the passageway which upon rotation advances the suture thread along the passageway and out through the hollow needle.